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Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/59/L.69

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. By operative paragraphs 3 (b), (c), (d), 4, 14 and 15 of draft resolution A/59/L.69, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to strengthen the role and leadership of the President of the General Assembly by:

(i) Augmenting the resources available to the Office of the President of the General Assembly from within existing resources, subject to consideration by the Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposed budget for 2006-2007, to provide for two posts at management and senior levels to be filled on an annual basis following consultations with the incoming President beginning at the sixtieth session of the Assembly (para. 3 (b));

(ii) Making available to the President of the General Assembly adequate office and conference space with a view to enabling the President to carry out his/her functions in a manner commensurate with the dignity and stature of the Office (para. 3 (c));

(iii) Requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the President of the General Assembly is provided with proper protocol services at Headquarters and at other United Nations duty stations (para. 3 (d));

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(b) Decide to establish an ad hoc working group open to all Member States to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly, including building on relevant Assembly resolutions, inter alia, through reviewing the agenda and working methods of the Assembly (para. 4);

(c) Request the Secretary-General to issue the rules of procedure of the General Assembly in a consolidated version in all official languages, in print and online (para. 14);

(d) Recommend the consideration of the use of optical scanners as a means of expediting the counting of votes cast through secret ballots during elections, taking due account of the security requirements in this regard and the credibility, reliability and confidentiality of such means, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the modalities thereof to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences (para. 15).

II. Relationship of the request to the programme of work and the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

2. The requests are related to section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, and section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the bienniums 2004-2005 and 2006-2007.

III. Estimated additional requirements

3. The request contained in paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution to add two senior-level posts to the Office of the President "from within existing resources" is indicated as being "subject to the consideration by the Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposed budget for 2006-2007". In this regard it is recalled that, in the proposals already presented, additional resources are sought in the proposed programme budget (A/60/6 (Sect.1), para. 1.13), under general temporary assistance for three positions (1 D-2, 1 D-1 and 1 General Service (Other level). It is understood that paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution reiterates this proposal and that it will indeed be considered in the context of the Assembly's consideration of the proposed budget for 2006-2007. While the draft resolution makes reference to "posts", it also calls for them "to be filled on an annual basis". Under the circumstances, the appropriate budgetary mechanism would be to make provision under general temporary assistance, as outlined in the initial budget proposal.

4. The costs associated with the provision of general temporary assistance would amount to $133,000 for the remaining part of the biennium 2004-2005 and to $875,800 for the biennium 2006-2007. Thus, the total requirements would amount to $1,008,800. While paragraph 3 (b) calls for the provision of these additional posts from within existing resources, no existing capacity can be identified at present to accommodate those post requirements. In this regard, it may be recalled that in paragraph 45 of its resolution 54/249 the General Assembly endorsed an observation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions regarding reference to "existing resources", whereby the Advisory Committee emphasized the responsibility of the Secretariat to inform the Assembly thoroughly and accurately

about whether there are enough resources to implement a new activity. The Assembly may wish to take this into account when considering the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

5. With regard to paragraph 3 (c) concerning adequate space for the Office of the President, it should be noted that, while the Headquarters complex is fully occupied and in view of the need for proximity to the General Assembly Hall, the Secretary-General will make every effort to identify suitable available space. Therefore, the implementation of paragraph 3 (c) would not give rise to any additional requirements at this stage. Should it not be feasible, however, to identify such office space, proposals would be made at a later stage.

6. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 3 (d) concerning the provision of proper protocol services to the President of the General Assembly, it should be noted that such services are being provided on an occasional basis when the Assembly meets. However, full-time provision of a dedicated protocol officer for the President of the General Assembly is not currently feasible owing to insufficient capacity of the Protocol and Liaison Service. Accordingly, a new P-3 post dedicated to the provision of proper protocol services for the President would be required. The total requirements arising from the request contained in paragraph 3 (d) would amount to $138,100.

7. With regard to the implementation of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, it is understood that the related requirements for conference services would be provided from within the entitlements of the General Assembly, which are incorporated in the calendar of conferences for the current and next bienniums. It is further understood that no two working groups of the Assembly would meet simultaneously. On that understanding, the implementation of paragraph 4 would not give rise to any additional requirements.

8. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 14 concerning the issuance of the rules of procedures of the General Assembly in all official languages in print and online, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management would require general temporary assistance resources equivalent to three work-months of one Professional staff member and two work-months of one General Service staff member. The total requirements arising from the request contained in paragraph 4 would amount to $60,300.

9. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 15 to consider optical scanners as a means of expediting the counting of votes, no immediate implications are foreseen, as any related expenditures would not arise before the matter has been further considered by the General Assembly.

IV. Conclusion

10. **The implementation of draft resolution A/59/L.69 would give rise to additional requirements of $133,000 in general temporary assistance for the biennium 2004-2005. Every effort would be made to accommodate those requirements within the appropriation for the biennium. The actual costs would be reported in the second financial performance report for the biennium 2004-2005.**

11. **The implementation of the draft resolution would also give rise to expenditures of $875,800 in respect of general temporary assistance already reflected in the initial budget proposals for the biennium 2006-2007. The amount of $198,400 for the protocol and rules of procedures items would be in addition to the initial proposals.**